

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 079013

O 011430 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1948

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SANAA 523

EXDIS

E. D 11652: GDS

TAGS: YE, YS, SA, PFOR, MCAP, MOPS

SUBJECT: YARG REQUEST FOR URGENT MILITARY ASSISTANCE

ADDIS ABABA PASS AMBASSADOR CRAWFORD

REF: SANAA 517

SUMMARY. BRITISH EMBASSY AWARE OF TROOP MASSINGS AT MANDAB BUT NOT ALLEGED PDRY INVASION PLAN. SAG MILATT FULLY BRIEFED ON BOTH ASPECTS AND HAS REPORTED TO RIYADH SAME TRIMMED LIST GIVEN ME BY COL IRYANI. HE ASSESSES INVASION THREAT AS " POSSIBILITY" AND BELIEVES SAG WOULD BE ABLE TO DELIVER SOME TRUCKS AND MACHINE GUNS IN LITTLE AS ONE WEEK. HE DOES NOT YET HAVE RIYADH' S REACTION TO HIS REPORT. MILATT ALSO TELLS US GENERAL KABBANI NOT COMING. WE STILL TEND TO VIEW YARG REPORT WITH SOME SKEPTICISM BUT POSSIBILITY OF INVASION CANNOT BE RULED OUT. PRUDENCE REQUIRES GIVING IT SERIOUS ATTENTION. ACTION REQUESTED: IN ADDITION CONSULTATIONS WITH SAG AND HMG, TO ASSESS SITUATION, RECOMMEND CONTINGENCY THINKING ON POSSIBLE ROLE FOR IRAN AND ETHIOPIA. ALSO RECOMMEND DISCUSSION WITH HMG ON REPEATING ITS EARLIER OFFER SEND MILITARY STUDY TEAM TO YEMEN. FINALLY, SUGGEST CONTINGENCY THINKING ON POSSIBILITY MIDEASTFOR DESTROYER PASSING THROUGH BAB AL- MANDAB STRAIT WHICH VERY CLOSE TO SECRET

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PERIM.

1. BUCK AND I CALL ON BOTH UK AMBASSDOR EDES AND SAG MILATT COL. ALIH AL- GHUFAYLI MORNING APRIL 1.

2. EDES TOLD US THAT HE HAD ESSENTIALLY SAME INFORMATION ON MANDAB TROOP MASSINGS AND ON EQUIPMENT ARRIVALS WITH NOTABLE EXCEPTION OF MIG-21' S

ABOUT WHICH WE ALSO SKEPTICAL, AT LEAST IN SUCH NUMBER AS 23). INFO CAME THROUGH OTHER CHANNELS FROM DEP CIC COL. HAMDI AND MININT AKWA. (WE AND EDES SUSPECT SOURCE OF THEIR INFO MAY IN FACT BE SAME AS COL. IRYANI' S). SIGNIFICANTLY BRITISH EMBASSY HAD NOT HEARD OF ALLEGED INVASION THREAT WITH SPECIFIED DATE, BUT THEY WILL URGENTLY TRY TO DEVELOP MORE INFO FROM THEIR OWN SOURCES AND KEEP US INFORMED. EDES GIVES THIS ASPECT SCOTCH VERDICT OF " NOT PROVEN." ON OTHER HAND, HE OBSERVED IT ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO PROVE MILITARY INTENTIONS AS OPPOSED TO CAPABILITIES. SITUATION THEREFORE DEMANDS PRUDENT ATTENTION. WE AGREE ENTIRELY.

3. EDES REMINDED US THAT ELEMENT OF HMG RESPONSE TO WHAT LATER PROVED TO BE UNAUTHORIZED ARMS SHOPPING LIST PRESENTED BY YARG AMBASSADOR MUTAWAKKIL WAS OFFER TO SEND MILITARY STUDY TEAM TO ASSESS YARG MILITARY CAPABILITIES AND NEEDS. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR HMG TO REPEAT THIS OFFER TO YARG AND RECOMMEND THAT WE RAISE SUBJECT WITH HMG. EDES BELIEVES THIS OFFER PROBABLY STILL VALID.

4. SUBSEQUENTLY IN CALL ON SAG MILATT COL. GHUFAYLI WE WERE ENCOURAGED TO LEARN THAT HE RECEIVED SAME PRESENTATION AS GIVEN US BY COL. IRYANI, TO INCLUDE TRIMMED LIST OF URGENTLY NEEDED EQUIPMENT. FULL REPORT, WE TOLD, HAS ALREADY BEEN RECEIVED BY SAG MINDEF PRINCE SULTAN. CHUFAYLI ALSO ASSESSES INTELLIGENCE REPORT ON INVASION ESSENTIALLY UNPROV- ABLE, BUT TENDS TOWARDS BELIEVING IT IN VIEW CON- siderable MASSING OF PDRY FORCES IN MANDAB AREA. WITH REGARD TO TRIMMED LIST, HE BELIEVES SAG COULD PROVIDE MILITARY TRUCKS, MACHINE GUNS, AND WATER TRUCKS " WITHIN A WEEK," BUT DOES NOT YET HAVE RIYADH' S REACTION TO HIS URGENT REPORTS.

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5. GHUFAYLI ALSO TELLS US THAT GENERAL KABBANI

NO LONGER SCHEDULED TO COME ON INSPECTION TRIP.
ON OTHER HAND, WE RECEIVED GOOD NEWS THAT SAG AMBASSADOR SIDAIRI
WILL
BE BACK IN 4-5 DAYS (PRESENT TEMPORARY CHARGE, ALTHOUGH CAPABLE, IS
COMPLETELY OUT OF PICTURE).

6. AS DEPT AWARE, IN ADDITION TO OUR ROLE OF DIRECT
ECONOMIC AND POSSIBLE INDIRECT MILITARY SUPPLIER, WE HAVE PORTRAYED
OURSELVES TO YARG AS ENCOURAGER AND EVEN COORDINATOR OF
ASSISTANCE
FROM FRIENDLY AREA STATES. EVEN PRIMIN HAJRI NOW APPARENTLY ACCEPTS
REASONING BEHIND NECESSITY OF OUR PLAYING INDIRECT ROLE IN
MILITARY AID SPHERE. IN THIS PARTICULAR INSTANCE, YARG IS NOT
ASKING US TO PLAY DIRECT VISIBLE ROLE, BUT IT DOES FEEL SOME
TREPIDATION THAT INDIRECT ROUTE MAY BE TOO CUMBERSOME IF USG DOES
NOT TAKE FIRM INITIATIVE BEHIND SCENES. SINCE SAG
APPARENTLY AS WELL BRIEFED AS WE ON CURRENT SITUATION, BELIEVE
IT SUFFICIENT AT MOMENT TO CONSULT WITH IT ON AGREED COURSE OF
ACTION.
IT OBVIOUSLY ESSENTIAL THEREAFTER, BASED ON HAJRI AND COL.
IRYANI STATEMENTS TO ME, THAT WE INFORM YARG
QUICKLY OF OUR JOINT CONCLUSION. FROM TENOR OF COL. CHUFAYLI'S
STATE-
MENTS, I HOPE THIS WOULD INCLUDE SAG SHIPMENT OF REASONABLE NUMBER
OF

ITEMS HE LISTED AS AVAILABLE ON SHORT NOTICE. THESE ARE CLEARLY ITEMS
YARG NEEDS BADLY, INVASION OR NOT.

7. ALTHOUGH AS INDICATED, WE SOMEWHAT SKEPTICAL OF INVASION
REPORT, BASED ON OUR LOW OPINION OF YARG INTELLIGENCE EVALUATION,
I BELIEVE PRUDENCE REQUIRES THINKING OF POSSIBLE CONTINGENCY ACTIONS
WE MIGHT TAKE. FIRST I THINK WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ENLIST
REGIONAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM IRAN AND ETHIOPIA, IF DEVELOPING
MILITARY SITUATION REQUIRES. IN PARTICULAR, I AM THINKING OF EARLIER

STATEMENTS BY YARG MINECON ASNAG AND ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR HERE TO
AMBASSADOR CRAWFORD TO EFFECT THAT IEG WAS PREPARING TO
PROVIDE TACTICAL AIR COVER TO YARG FORCES DURING
YAR- PDRY WAR LAST FALL WHEN HOSTILITIES ABRUPTLY
CEASED. THIS IS OFFER THAT MIGHT BE REACTIVATED
IF SITUATION WARRANTS. ALSO SUGGEST, FOR DEPT'S
CONSIDERATION, CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR POSSIBLE
SAILING OF MIDEASTFOR DESTROYER THROUGH BAB AL- MANDAB. BELIEVE
INTERNATIONAL CHANNEL RUNS WITHIN ABOUT THREE MILES OF PERIM,
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GIVING US GOOD LOOK AT ISLAND AND SUGGESTING TO PDRY THAT USG

PAYING ATTENTION TO ITS TROOP MASSINGS.
NEWTON

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS
*** Current Classification *** SECRET

Message Attributes

Automatic DecapTIONing: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 APR 1973
DecapTION Date: 28 MAY 2004
DecapTION Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SANAA00523
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SANAA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730431/aaaahjqe.tel
Line Count: 175
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <01-Aug-2001 by reddocgw, EXDIS>; RELEASED <23-Jan-2002 by golinofr>; APPROVED <23-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 971117
Subject: YARG REQUEST FOR URGENT MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TAGS: MCAP, MOPS, PFOR, SA, YE, YS
To: ADDIS ABABA
JIDDA
LONDON
SECSTATE WASHDC
SS
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

